

# The FREETHINKER

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## Views and Opinions.

The "Freethinker" and The "Morning Post."

ONE ought never to be anything but gentle with the dear old *Morning Post*, and if when I recently described it as catering for the most hopelessly ignorant class of the community, I hurt its feelings, I feel that I owe it an apology. But then I really did not think that it would see the *Freethinker*, and so felt that I might describe its general function in the newspaper world without hurting anyone. And not for any thing would I unnecessarily hurt the feelings of the dear old ladies, the garrulous retired service men, the survivals of the Stone Age of theology, and the harmless old-fashioned club man, who together form the backbone of its subscribers. I myself owe the *Morning Post* many hours of amusement. I remember with joy the series of articles it once published on the Jewish conspiracy, by which it proved that almost everything that occurred of a revolutionary character since the invasion of William the Conqueror down to the world war, including the Reformation, the Cromwellian revolution and the French Revolution, had been brought about by an international secret Committee of Jews. It was deliciously funny. I had never enjoyed anything so much since in the days of my boyhood I wallowed knee-deep in the gore of pirates and bandits and Red Indians, and the exploits of detectives that placed the creations of Edgar Wallace in the background. And there was a subtle flattery in the picture of the Jew being able to twist the gullable Christian this way and that until the *Morning Post* disclosed the plot. Then I remember the lurid stories about the Russian persecution—the Bolshevik ones, of course, it would have outraged clubland had it been equally imaginative with the persecutions under the Czar. I recall the tales of Christian bishops who were placed between blocks of ice and sawn in two, of others who were killed several times over, and the way in which every vestige of religion had been cleared out of Russia—by the *Morning Post*. In a dull world the *Morning Post* is a

paper we can ill-afford to lose. It is as harmless as the village natural and (in certain directions) as interesting as would be a reincarnation of Ananias.

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### An Unconscious Compliment,

So in order to clear up all misapprehension I reprint the following from the *Morning Post* of March 7:—

If the Presbyterian is only the priest writ large, the Atheist is only the bigot more bitter, I am moved to this reflection by a journal called the *Freethinker* which is furious with the *Morning Post* for daring to reprint the views of over two hundred Fellows of the Royal Society recently published by the Christian Evidence Society. "I haven't read the book," says the *Freethinker*, "and don't intend to waste time—or 12s. 6d.—by doing so." Infidelity, it would appear, takes things on faith!

Now with my hand on my heart I assure the *Post* that I was not furious when I wrote my notes on God and the Scientists. Why should I be? If I do not get furious with the stupidities of the bulk of religious defences and defenders, why should I get furious with the second-hand stupidities of the *Morning Post*? I am not even furious when the *Post* describes one of the best known and most hated weekly journals in the country as "a journal called the *Freethinker*." I simply smile at the picture of the writer savagely digging his pen into the ink-pot with a that-will-make-him-squirm kind of a look on his face. This elaborate pretence is really a compliment to our effectiveness.

\* \* \*

### Voting for God.

We must be gentle with the weak; so I will try to explain very gently and kindly why I wrote what I did about God and the scientists in the *Freethinker* for March 6. First, I was not angry with the *Morning Post* for giving prominence to the Christian Evidence Society's publication on the religious opinions of scientists. It is the kind of thing which I should expect the *Post* to do. I merely instanced it as an illustration of the parlous state of intelligence in certain quarters. One paper I saw was even more illuminating in its comment. It said—in large type—that three out of four, out of two hundred scientists—had voted for God—with qualifications. God was returned to power with a large majority! Never since the famous Eatanswill election had there been anything so striking. Two hundred scientists had been consulted. About fifty per cent said they believed there was something of the kind about. About twenty-five per cent said they thought there might be something of the sort somewhere. The rest knew nothing about him, and 100 per cent of the number failed to find any kind of a scientific use for him. So I cited the *Morning Post* giving one of its centre pages to such a footling and foolish investigation as

illustrative of (1) the low level of certain of the British newspapers, and (2) of the very sad state in which religion found itself to-day when it is driven to canvas for testimonials to the existence of God, even though those who professed to believe in his existence didn't know what the deuce he was like or what the devil he did.

Now in my innocence I was convinced that the question of whether there was a God or not gained nothing from a majority vote of scientists *unless the vote was based upon such knowledge as gave these scientists their authority*. It would not be enough to say that certain scientists found nothing against their believing in a God. For their testimony to be of value it should be based upon something they know. But none of them said this. No scientist in the world has ever said this. All their testimony amounted to was the statement that they believed in a God. But if this is all, why go to the scientists? Why not go to a Salvation Army meeting, or to an evangelistic gathering, or to a Church Assembly, or even to the editorial department of the *Morning Post*? In all these places one might get a unanimous vote, not a majority vote merely. But the correctness of an opinion is really not settled by a vote. Truth is independent of majorities. The majority of fools will always believe something silly, and it is the fate of truth to be always struggling against an overwhelming vote. I pointed out these things, directly and indirectly to the *Morning Post*, but it seems I did not put the matter simply enough. I took too much for granted. I apologise most profoundly.

\* \* \*

#### Spoo!f!

I hope now that I have made it plain to the *Morning Post* that it was not because it is my plan to take things on faith that I did not spend money and time on reading the book on the religious beliefs of scientists. Had I read it, it would have told me no more than I knew, it can tell a sensible person no more than he, or she knows. The book simply tells them that a number of persons believe in something about which they know nothing, and for which they can find no useful function. I knew the book was part of the old game of bluff. It was the old game of the exploitation of ignorance by knavery, and I mildly suggested to the *Morning Post* that it ought to have known better than to take a hand in such a game. The Christian Evidence Society has not the slightest belief that the book will alter the opinions of scientists, or of any man who intelligently disbelieves in a God. They will—if they read the book—smile and continue as they were. But, says the Christian Evidence Society, "There are still a large number of people who believe in God, and these people will be impressed if they are told that certain scientists also believe in a God. We will not inform them that the God they profess to believe in is not the God of their religion; we will not tell them that the questions asked are couched in such a way that a man can answer that he does believe in a God, although he means something that is not a God at all; above all we will not explain that with these scientists their knowledge gives them nothing on which to base the belief. We will publish this 'Enquiry' in the hope that the majority of those who read the book will confuse what a scientist believes apart from his science with what his science teaches, and so will leave their reading with the impression that present-day science endorses the belief in deity."

It is an old game, but a very dishonest one. That is why I raised a very mild, but good-humoured protest against a newspaper lending its space and its name to so obvious a deception. I erred in paying

the *Morning Post* too great a compliment. But I did not expect it to pay me a compliment in return. For unconsciously the *Post* has justified my description of it as catering for the most hopelessly ignorant part of the community. We wish that constituency well with its God who has just scraped home by a majority.

As I close I recall a scene from one of Lucian's dialogues that appears to fit the case. There is a certain scene in which an Atheist and a Theist are discussing whether Gods exist or not. All the old arguments are advanced by the Theist and easily demolished by his opponent. Eventually the Atheist walks off while the Theist calls names after him. Jove is disquieted by the way in which the arguments for the existence of the Gods have been demolished, and the evident approval of many of the listeners to the discussion. One of the minor Gods reminds Jove that there are few wise men but all the fools are on their side. "Yes," replied Jove, "that is true, but I would sooner have one philosopher than a thousand fools."

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### The Poet of Humanity.

- "Sun-reader, life and light be thine for ever."  
Browning.
- "O heart whose beating blood was running song."  
Swinburne.
- "Cor cordium (Heart of hearts)."  
Inscription on Shelley's Tomb.

It is the fate of great writers to be talked of rather than read. Few have suffered so much in this respect as the poet Shelley. Books on the poet are as numerous "as leaves in Vallambrossa," but far too many of these publications are concerned with chatter concerning his first wife, and not with his literary works. Shelley, when alive, would have been astonished at so remarkable a display of publicity. Scorned whilst living, his name carries far to-day. Continental critics know it well enough. In the New World it is known as a most famous name. As for English readers, it dwarfs for us most of the nineteenth century writers, although they are some of the most considerable in our thousand years of literature.

Shelley was the poet of the Revolution. On the day of his birth, August 4, 1792, it was decreed by the National Assembly that Louis was no longer King of France. On the same day the Emperor of Germany and the King of Prussia declared their opposition to the French Revolution, and threatened Paris with all the horrors of war. Nor is this all, for Mary Wollstonecraft, the mother of Shelley's Mary, had just issued her famous manifesto, "The Vindication of the Rights of Woman." Shelley was himself a disciple of William Godwin, and it is no exaggeration to add that Shelley's verse often reflects the teachings of the master.

Shelley's own writings were saturated with revolutionary ideas. Georgian society was perfectly agreed that such notions were but a mad illusion. And society denounced him accordingly, and fined and imprisoned the men and women who sold the poet's "Queen Mab." Florence to the living Dante was not more cruel nor more unjust than Georgian England to the living Shelley. Not until a generation after the English poet's untimely death was his literary genius widely acknowledged, and even at the Centenary Celebration at Horsham, most of the speakers referred very discreetly to Shelley's Free-thought and Democratic opinions, and emphasized

loudly his claims on the Sussex county families, a very worthy race, but innocent of art and literature.

Shelley's poetic subjects were not odes to Julia's cockatoo, nor the philanderings of Don Juan, but the perfectability of human nature. It is the beginning and the end of his poetry. In the sonorous rhetoric of "Queen Mab," in the nobler lines of "The Revolt of Islam," in the crashing music in his masterpiece, "Prometheus Unbound," its expression glows with the inspiration of prophecy. And Shelley did not make rhymes for mere recreation. He meant every word that he wrote. Shortly before his own death, he said to his friend, Captain Trelawny, "I am ninety," meaning that he had lived and felt so intensely that he felt older than his years. Nor was it an idle boast, for he was himself the "Julian" of his poem:—

"Me, who am as a nerve o'er which do creep  
The else unfelt oppression of this earth."

Shelley lived like a soldier on the battlefield. A hunk of bread and a little fruit served him for a meal. "Mary, have I dined?" he once asked his wife. His income was spent on the poor, on struggling men of genius, and on necessitous friends. Shelley was always giving. He inquired personally into the circumstances of his charities, visited the sick in their homes, and kept a list of persons whom he assisted. At Marlow he suffered from acute ophthalmia, contracted whilst visiting afflicted lace-makers in their cottages. So practical was he that he even went to the length of attending a London Hospital in order to acquire medical knowledge that should prove of service to the sick he visited.

Because of Shelley's Atheism society gave the poet a bad name, and he only escaped prison by leaving the country. Christian critics imputed the basest and meanest motives to his most innocent actions. It did not mean anything to them that the heir to one of the richest men of England lived like a Spartan, and was unreservedly obedient to the right as he saw it. Byron, who was as cynical as Charles the Second, acknowledged Shelley to be the best and purest-minded man he had ever met. Captain Trelawny, another intimate friend, said that the Atheist poet "loved everything better than himself."

Yet, simply because Shelley was an Atheist, generations of Christians have insinuated that the poet was a bad man, and belittled his writings. They cast libellous dust in the eyes of the public, and incapacitated them from seeing the real facts of the case. They also discredited the cause to which he dedicated his life. They have read the very worst of motives into Shelley's relations with his first wife. They ignore the fact that when they parted she was provided for, and that her death, years afterwards, had nothing to do with Shelley's so-called "desertion." Shelley and his wife were but boy and girl when they married, and it was the very chivalry of Shelley's nature that led the young couple into such an act of imprudence. Had Shelley made Harriet his mistress, instead of his wife, Georgian society would not have been so shocked. There were hundreds of such cases in society, indeed:—

"Were it not better done as other use  
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,  
Or with the tangles of Nacra's hair."

Critics pretend that "Queen Mab" is juvenile rubbish. It was not the boyish work that they suggest. During the last years of his life, when his intellect was mature, Shelley told Trelawny that the matter of the poem was good, it was only the treatment that was immature. Shelley's masterpiece, "Prometheus Unbound," written in the meridian of his splendid genius, deals with emancipated humanity no less than the earlier work. And Shelley

bolstered the poetry of "Queen Mab" with voluminous notes, written with all the meticulous attention to detail which is the hall-mark of Teutonic professors. Clearly "Queen Mab" was other than rubbish; otherwise Christians would never have imprisoned men and women for selling it.

In order to belittle Shelley's work, critics pretend that his poetry is concerned with clouds and sunsets, and that he lacked humour. It is true that his humour is not so obvious as that of Mr. George Robey, but it is to be found in his correspondence, and in his burlesque of Wordsworth's "Peter Bell." The suggestion that his poetry is nearly all moonshine is absurd to those who know his work "The Cenci" is not only fine poetry, but it is finer drama. Remember the realistic simplicity of the final speech as Beatrice goes to her execution:—

"Give yourself no unnecessary pain,  
My dear Lord Cardinal. Here, mother, tie  
My girdle for me, and bind up this hair  
In any simple knot; ay, that does well.  
And your's I see is coming down. How often  
Have we done this for one another; now  
We shall not do it any more. My Lord,  
We are quite ready. Well, 'tis very well."

There was a great dramatist in the young man who wrote those lines, and G. W. Foote was justified in saying that the drowning of Shelley was the heaviest loss that English literature has ever sustained. Dead at twenty-nine, posterity has but the outcome of Shelley's cruder years. Had Shakespeare died at the same age, he would have been remembered as the young poet who wrote "Romeo and Juliet," but we should have missed the glories of "Hamlet" and "Othello," and the other masterpieces which make English literature the admiration of the civilized world. What young Shelley might have become we cannot conceive; but in his short life he wrote his name in stars on the firmament of fame, and made good the splendid boast of Swinburne concerning Liberty:—

"I am the trumpet at thy lips, thy clarion,  
Full of thy cry, sonorous with thy breath;  
The graves of souls born worms and creeds grown carrion,  
Thy blast of judgment fills with fires of death.  
Thou art the player whose organ-keys are thunders,  
And I beneath thy foot the pedal prest;  
Thou art the ray wherewith the rent night sunders,  
And I the cloudlet borne upon thy breast,  
I shall burn up before thee, pass and perish,  
As haze in sunrise on the red sea-line;  
But thou from dawn to sunset shall cherish  
The thoughts that led and souls that lighted mine."

MIMNERMUS.

### William Blake.

THOSE verses smelling of the lamp  
Are not of thee, thou wayward child;  
Much study doth the spirit cramp.  
They bear the very mark and stamp  
Of all that poetry hath defiled,  
Those verses smelling of the lamp.  
Though Tennyson may roar and ramp,  
For me thy simple songs and mild:  
Much study doth the spirit cramp.  
I have heard Kipling strum and vamp;  
Slipped on the polished verse of Wilde,  
Those verses smelling of the lamp.  
The verse of College, Court, and Camp,  
To these thou ne'er wert reconciled:  
Much study doth the spirit cramp.  
Such verses did thy spirit damp:  
Though Don and Critic are beguiled  
By verses smelling of the lamp,  
Much study doth the spirit cramp.

BAYARD SIMMONS.

## Anti-clericalism in Spain.

IN Spain to-day they sing a malicious little song:—

In the house of the priest  
I see but one bed—  
If the priest sleeps in it,  
Tell me, where does his maid sleep?

And a new anti-clerical weekly, *Fray Lazo*, devotes itself almost exclusively to the exploitation of this one theme: the immorality of the clergy. Clearly, a new spirit is at work in Spain.

Only three years ago the national dramatist, Jacinto Benavente, created a scandal by producing a play in which one of the minor characters was a bishop. A bishop on the Spanish stage! Scandal! Sacrilege! But to-day the people openly make fun of the clergy—their hypocrisy, their greed, their abuse of Confession. Throughout Spain there arose a clamour for the expulsion of the Jesuits, the nationalization of Church property, and the establishment of *lay* schools and *lay* cemeteries.

The Spaniards are astonished at their own temerity; but, like schoolboys suddenly set free, they are taking delight in their new liberty. The scabrous broadsheet, *Fray Lazo*, fills them with a kind of half-guilty glee. The news of the burning of convents and monasteries leaves the majority of them unmoved. A Cabinet Minister said: "Burn a few hundred monasteries, and no one will notice that they are missing. We have plenty in Spain." What can be the cause of this surprising *volle face*?

First, let there be no misunderstanding: Spain is far from being *entirely* anti-clerical. Vested interests would not permit so complete a revolution as that. (You can still see priests driving through Madrid in luxurious automobiles, and smoking cigars in the best hotels of Sevilla.) But there is a tremendous new movement against the clergy. I was in Bilbao during the month of January, when the anti-Catholic rioting occurred. Priests did not dare to venture into the streets. Crosses were torn from the hearses. The Churches had to be guarded by troops, or they would have been saturated with petrol, and burned. Yet only a year ago Spain was the chief stronghold of Catholicism in Europe!

The truth is, that the Spanish Revolution of 1931, was the instinctive effort of the nation to free itself, not only from the feudalism of the Court, but also from the Court's ally: the Church. César Falcón writes: "When the people of Spain went out into the streets to protest against the insolence of the monarchy, they certainly were not aware of their own anti-clericalism. The anti-clericalism and, consequently, the incendiary outburst, arose in the street, through contact with reality. It issued from the instinctive orientation of the masses towards the true causes of their trouble. The people perceived the surreptitious conspiracies of the convents, and rushed upon them." The Revolution will not be complete until the Church has gone the way of the Monarchy—finally, irremediably. Monarchy and Church were allies in an anti-evolutionary struggle. They both depended for their existence upon the backwardness and submissiveness of the people. Their politics (as Falcón has shown) were calculated to maintain undiminished the preponderance of natural forces over the activities of man.

Three-quarters of Spain rely for their life upon rain and atmospheric phenomena. Even in the irrigated areas, water can only be obtained by the most primitive means, and only a short distance from the rivers agriculture depends entirely upon rainfall. In the rest of the country the dependence is of course greater and more dramatic. This subordination of

man to nature not only diminishes his economic possibilities, but also creates a special psychology. Man acquires a certain fatalism, an unshakable resignation to his servitude. He has a presentiment of the uselessness of insurrection, since even his most fierce rebellions cannot bring rain nor impede hail. Among people of this mentality the feudal system (*i.e.*, the local *señor*, linked to the local priest and to a central dispenser of favours) can work unchecked.

The monarchy fell precisely because its continued existence made it impossible for Spain to become a truly modern State. The Church—unless it can adapt itself to the new conditions—will fall for the same reason. Many provincial priests have declared themselves "republican," to save their bacon. And the religious orders are striving frantically to arrange some compromise; to harness the Revolution; to retain their immense riches and power. But Spain is moving towards Socialism, and the people know that no compromise is possible between the Church and a policy of nationalization.

You may remember how Maurice Hindus, in *Humanity Uprooted*, has described the astonishing collapse of the Orthodox Church in Russia: a similar collapse of the Catholic Church may well occur in Spain. It will be seen that Spain, like the rest of the world, has ceased to be Catholic at heart, though she (*unlike* the rest of the world) has not displayed outwardly the stages of her religious evolution. She will suddenly appear before us as a nation that has abandoned Catholicism. The Monarchy was dead before it fell; the Church is dead also.

GEORGE PENDLE.

## Law, Morals and Literature.

THE spate of "realistic" literature which has marked the post-War years appears now to be declining. In this calmer atmosphere it seems appropriate to take stock of the attitude of the law towards liberty expressed through the medium of literature.

The law rightly punishes the publication of matter which constitutes an offence against public order, for it is clearly the duty of the Government in a civilized State to protect the minds as well as the bodies of its subjects from attack which may involve disturbance of the peace; it is also conceived, in modern times, to be the duty of the Government to promote the mental and bodily health of the governed. Literature, therefore, which offends against public order is justifiably restrained—and herein no difficulty arises. A very real difficulty, however, may arise when the law interferes to prevent or to punish publications which are thought to be likely to offend against public order, since likelihood to offend is subjective; a book or newspaper article, or a picture may appear to one person to deal decently with a scientific problem or artistic conception whilst appearing to another person, equally honest and intelligent, to be indecent and obscene.

It is a misdemeanour at the common law to publish an obscene work. "The test of obscenity" was defined by Chief Justice Cockburn in *Reg. v. Hickin* (1868), L.R. 3 Q.B. 360 at p. 371, to be "whether the tendency of the matter charged as obscenity is to deprave and corrupt those whose minds are open to such immoral influences, and into whose hands a publication of this sort may fall." This definition is open to the objection that a writer's serious work may be condemned because it is open to misconstruction by the weakest and most depraved minds in the community which are commonly most "open to immoral influences." Its (apparently) excessively wide

sweep is, however, satisfactorily accounted for in the remainder of the Chief Justice's observations (at pp. 371-373).

The case arose out of the provisions of the Obscene Publications Act, 1857 (20 and 21 Vict. c. 83), commonly known as "Lord Campbell's Act." That Statute was enacted "to give additional powers for the suppression of the trade in obscene books, prints, drawings, and other obscene articles," with a view to "more effectually preventing" their sale; and, by Section I, it authorized a magistrate or two justices to issue a special warrant ordering the seizure of any books or other articles (a) which are reasonably believed to be obscene, and are kept in any house or other place for the purpose of sale or distribution; and (b) of which one or more has or have been sold or distributed in connexion with that house or place, and is or are of such a character and description that their publication would be a misdemeanour proper to be prosecuted as such; and upon seizure they are to call upon the occupier of the premises to appear within seven days before a court of petty sessions to show cause why the articles seized should not be destroyed. Such articles so seized are to be destroyed if the court is satisfied that the complaint (upon oath) upon which the warrant was issued is proved to be well founded, *i.e.*, as to the character of the articles and the purposes for which they were being kept.

It is to be noted that the above provisions do not make it an offence to be possessed of an obscene work; the offence lies in having it for the purpose of publishing it by sale or distribution; and the making of a profit upon such sale or distribution is immaterial.

The above-mentioned case illustrates, further, that the motive also is immaterial. The work will not be immune from seizure and destruction by reason of the fact that its possessor was prompted by no motive of gain or desire to undermine public morals, but, on the contrary, to further some cause which he believed would prove advantageous to the public.

The case came before the Court of Queen's Bench, who reversed the decision of the Recorder, who at the Wolverhampton Quarter Sessions had quashed (subject to the opinion of the court) the decision of two justices of the borough of Wolverhampton, ordering the destruction of obscene works of some two hundred copies of a pamphlet found on the premises of the appellant (his dwelling-house). The Recorder was inclined to the view that though the work was obscene the appellant's intention was an innocent one, and that, therefore, criminal intent necessary to found a prosecution was lacking, and in that case the justices could not order the destruction of his copies. The complaint had been made by a police officer acting under the direction of the Borough Watch Committee. The appellant, one Henry Scott, resided in Wolverhampton, where he enjoyed a good commercial status and, generally, a high reputation. He was neither a publisher nor a bookseller; in fact, he was engaged in business as a metal broker. Amongst his personal interests was membership of a society styled "The Protestant Electoral Union," which had amongst its objects the defeat of the "Romish Church" in and through Parliament. The appellant purchased and re-sold a large number of copies of a pamphlet entitled *The Confessional Unmasked*, but not at a profit; he bought his supplies from the offices of the Society in London, and re-sold in his own locality to persons who asked for copies. One half of the pamphlet related to controversial questions of a theological nature, which was admittedly not obscene; the other half exposed the alleged immoralities involved in the practice of auricular confession, "showing into what minute and disgusting details these *holy men* [quoting authorities of

eminence in the Roman Catholic Church] have entered."

Chief Justice Cockburn was of the view that the work would suggest to the minds of the young of either sex, or even to persons of more advanced years, thoughts of a most impure and libidinous character. "The very reason why this work is put forward to expose the practices of the Roman Catholic confessional is the tendency of questions, involving practices and propensities of a certain description, to do mischief to the minds of those to whom such questions are addressed, by suggesting thoughts and desires which otherwise would not have occurred to their minds." If that were so as between the priest and the person confessing, it must equally be so "when the whole is put into the shape of a series of paragraphs, one following upon another, each involving some impure practices, some of them of the most filthy and disgusting and unnatural description it is possible to imagine." The work, he concluded, was "in every sense of the term, an obscene and, therefore, indictable publication." Was it rendered any the less so because the ulterior object in view, aimed at by the distributor of the work, might be "an honest and even a laudable one?" You cannot justify the doing of an illegal act by contending that it may produce ultimately a "greater good." In order to prevent the progress of Catholicism is a man justified in doing that "which has necessarily the immediate tendency of demoralizing the public mind wherever this publication is circulated?" He thought that "the old sound and honest maxim, that you shall not do evil that good may come, is applicable in law as well as in morals." Here was "a certain and positive evil produced for the purpose of effecting an uncertain, remote and very doubtful good." As to criminal intention, he held, finally, that "where a man publishes a work manifestly obscene, he must be taken to have had the intention which is implied from that act." You may not "break the law for some wholesome and salutary purpose." You must accomplish your object in a legal manner "or let it alone."

Mr. Justice Lush pointed out, in answer to arguments put forward on behalf of the appellant, that it did not follow that because a picture, *e.g.*, "Venus in the Dulwich Gallery," was exhibited in a public gallery it might be sold in the streets with impunity (at p. 365). Or, as Cockburn, C. J. put it (at p. 367): "immunity must depend upon the circumstances of the publication"; he instanced an illustrated medical treatise which would become indictable (as to the illustrations) if the prints were exhibited "for any one, boys and girls, to see as they pass."

Counsel for the appellant contended, also, that if the pamphlet here in question were held obscene so, too, would the courts be bound to hold such works as the following:—

MILTON: *Authoris pro se defensio contra Alexandrum Morum*, as well as *Paradise Lost and Regained*.

COLLIER: *View of the Immorality of the English Stage* (published in order to combat stage indecencies).

A standard dictionary, it was argued, might similarly be objected to, as also "the works of the standard authors in English poetry, from Chaucer to Byron"; so, too, might be instanced Juvenal's Sixth Satire in Dryden's translation.

Mr. Justice Blackburn opined (at p. 366) that if the effect as well as the object of a publication were good, that might well render it lawful.

In an indictment charging that a publication constitutes an obscene libel it should be averred that it is "to the prejudice of public morals," it was held in *Rex v. Barraclough* [1906], 1 K.B. 201, C.C.R.

And publication with that intention must be alleged (*ibid*). Nevertheless, in the case cited, the Court for Consideration of Crown Cases Reserved (Lord Alverstone, C.J., Wills, Darling and Walton J.J.) refused to quash a conviction where the indictment had charged merely that the defendant "unlawfully and maliciously . . . did publish a document containing divers obscene matters and things" concerning a named woman and her alleged sexual misconduct with the writer of the document. Mr. Justice Darling put it thus: "If a thing which is properly called obscene is alleged to be unlawfully published, it follows that all the usual allegations in an indictment for obscene libel are included." Intent is part of the indictment and of the charge, even though not directly and formally averred, "or the publication would not have been unlawful." See, further, the Indictments Act, 1915 (*post*).

In *Reg. v. Thomson* (1900), 64 J.P. 456 the defendant was prosecuted for publishing the Heptameron; the Common Serjeant (Bosanquet) held that it was material to consider the nature and type of other books sold in the defendant's shop; for if they were indecent that circumstance would go towards proving her intention to corrupt public morals by that particular book, in that its sale could hardly, in the circumstances, be thought to have resulted from an accidental offer of goods the nature of which was not present to the mind of the seller.

A book must be considered as a whole; the case ought not to be decided upon a consideration merely of extracted passages from it. (*ibid*).

By the Criminal Procedure Act, 1851 (14 & 15 Vict. c. 100) it is provided (by Section 29) that any term of imprisonment warranted by law, with or without hard labour, may be awarded upon conviction for publicly selling or exposing for public sale or to public view any obscene book, print, picture or other indecent exhibition.

Imprisonment up to twelve months (with or without hard labour) may be awarded on conviction or indictment, or a fine up to ten pounds may be imposed on summary conviction, under the provisions of Section 63 of the Post Office Act, 1908 (8 Edw. 7 c. 48), which prohibits the sending of a postal packet (a) bearing any "words, marks or designs of an indecent, obscene, or grossly offensive character," or (b) enclosing any "indecent or obscene print, painting, photograph, lithograph, engraving, book, or card, or any indecent or obscene article," whether similar to "any filth, any noxious or deleterious substance" or not.

Advertisements of remedies for venereal diseases (other than those issued by local or public authorities) are prohibited by Section 2 of the Venereal Disease Act, 1917 (7 & 8 Geo. 5 c. 21). The penalties for infringement are (by Section 3), (i.) on conviction on indictment, up to two years' imprisonment (with or without hard labour); or (ii.) on summary conviction up to six months' imprisonment or a fine up to one hundred pounds.

The Indictments Act, 1915 (5 & 6 Geo. 5, c. 90) provides (in Schedule I, Form 23) a form of indictment in respect of obscene libel as follows:—

STATEMENT OF OFFENCE

First Count.

Publishing obscene libel.

Particulars of Offence.

E.M., on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, in the County of \_\_\_\_\_, sold, uttered, and published and caused or procured to be sold, uttered, and published an obscene libel the particulars of which are deposited with this indictment [Particulars to specify pages and lines complained of where necessary, as in a book].

STATEMENT OF OFFENCE.

Second Count.

Procuring obscene libel [or thing] with intent to sell or publish.

Particulars of Offence.

E.M., on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, in the County of \_\_\_\_\_, procured an obscene libel [or thing], the particulars of which are deposited with this indictment, with intent to sell, utter or publish such obscene libel [or thing].

W. SUMMERFIELD.

Acid Drops.

We are familiar in this country with the devices of the Church to secure "Christian" burial for notable Freethinkers. We need only mention the case of Swinburne. The late M. Briand was not only a Freethinker, but he was under major excommunication. Yet the Vatican's representatives, anxious no doubt to steal some of the world-wide and well deserved tribute to M. Briand's services to international peace, performed what a French writer called "the impious ceremony" over his remains. Such is the brevity of popular memory that the man whose chief work for France, apart from war services, was the Secularization measure, will assuredly be supposed in the not distant future to have died "fortified by the rites of Holy Church," and in almost his last breath to have renounced the opinions of a life time. There is not a shred of reliable evidence that M. Briand ever retracted his secularist views, or that he had any need for a priest before he died.

The Paris correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*—a more reliable and independent authority than the Cardinal Archbishop of that city—wrote as follows in his message of March 11:—

I have seen to-day an intimate friend of M. Briand, who saw him not many hours before his death. He begged me to say on behalf of M. Briand's friends that there is not a word of truth in the stories that have been circulated about a change in M. Briand's opinions, that M. Briand remained a Freethinker to the day of his death, and that nothing would have been more repugnant to him than the religious ceremonies that have been arranged.

Indignation in the lobbies of the Chamber this afternoon about the matter had by no means cooled down. A deputy has introduced a bill providing for the transfer of M. Briand's remains to the Panthéon, but it is not likely to be pressed in view of M. Briand's explicit desire to be buried at Cocherel, which can hardly be disregarded. M. Briand wished to be buried in a spot in his own garden which he himself chose; that is to say, in unconsecrated ground.

The *Referer* announced that M. Briand "was buried at his own request, with all the rites of the Church he once forsook." We recall the worrying priest at the death-bed of Rousseau and remain entirely unconvinced that this is the truth. And the *Times* special correspondent says Cardinal Verdier "did not give the formal absolution." He only said the *De Profundis* and the *Pater* and "sprinkled the coffin with holy water, making the sign of the cross." In other words just enough to justify the suggestion of Briand's conversion, but not enough to commit the Church to it.

What the *Morning Post* calls "a remarkable development" has taken place in "the controversy over the relations of Church and State"—viz., "no less than a voluntary act of disestablishment by the Church." Fortunately no such voluntary act is possible. The Church is the creature of Parliament, and all this anxiety to get rid of its control is the result of a fear of disestablishment. The Commission appointed by the Archbishop at the request of the National Assembly has not yet reported, and it is a suspicious circumstance that four members of that Commission are associated with the Church Self-Government League, which has twenty-nine episcopal vice-presidents, and thus a majority of thirteen among the Bishops. Why was it left to the

*Morning Post* to dig out of its hole and corner existence this new dust-distributing agency? One of the most liberal of the Bishops (Durham) has expressed the hope that when Disestablishment comes—he favours it—Parliament will be “not less generous to the Church of England than it was to the Church of England in Wales.” A Parliament elected to improve the nation's material resources must not be allowed to use its grotesque majority to provide a permanent dole for one declining denomination.

Brighton recently applied for a half-hour's extension, from 10 to 10.30 p.m., of summer-time drinking hours. Despite the fact that this application was supported by several important bodies, including the Chamber of Commerce and a big majority of town councillors, it was opposed—as was to be expected—by a number of pious kill-joys from various church councils. Although these latter make great show of the moral purpose of their objections, their interference with the liberties of others is prompted by motives no whit different from those underlying the objection to Sunday cinemas. They hate to see others enjoying themselves in ways which they themselves are mentally and physically incapable of doing. If their objection is upheld, Brighton will have to console itself at 10 p.m. by adopting as its catchword the final remarks of our popular friend Alexander and Mose—“Well, bo'; wha' d'you say to a glass of sarsaparilla!”

A correspondent of the *British Medical Journal* writing on the subject of maternal mortality amongst the Maoris states that in pre-European times a death in childbirth was practically unheard of. “Now that the Maori woman has adopted our mode of life the maternal mortality has risen to 10.6 per 1,000 births.” But it does not appear that the true cause of this state of affairs was alluded to in this particular letter. From the same part of the world, however, and from the information of the Resident Commissioners of the Gilbert Islands, we learn that clothes have been worn there for a quarter of a century and their dirtiness “is often horrible and indescribable.” He continues, “Clothes are now so closely associated in the popular mind with Christianity, that an open crusade against them would be regarded by the native as a deliberate assault upon religion; they must now be regarded as an ineradicable evil.” Further comment seems superfluous.

The Rev. Reginald Bartlett, of the London Missionary Society, recently gave an address—described as “fascinating”—on “The Bible in the Island of Turtles.” We feel sure the address was as described, for a description of the Bible in its truly natural setting couldn't help but be fascinating. And we are reminded of the fact that it is the turtle-minded section of the inhabitants of the British Isles who most appreciate the Bible.

A chapel parson recently remarked that when in conversation with King George his Majesty showed a remarkable knowledge of Methodism. How thrilling! We feel sure the parson was awestruck at this wonderful exhibition of knowledge, and quite convinced that God has something to do with the making of Kings.

How is the Christian to face the troubles of life? This is the question the Rev. Dr. J. E. Rattenbury set out to answer at Wesley's Chapel recently. His reply was—by accepting the conception of life as a pilgrimage. In other words, we presume, the Christian is invited to screw up his courage, in facing the facts of life, by dangling before his eyes a hope of recompense and everlasting bliss in a presumed hereafter. It sounds very like the traditional mode of getting a donkey to do something by dangling a carrot in front of his nose. The Christian who accepts the conception of life as a pilgrimage would appear to possess the moke mentality.

“The business of the Church,” declares a parson, “is not to conquer the world, but to liberate Jesus—he will conquer the world.” By the look of things, we are inclined to fancy that the Church has been hardly a success in the liberating line. After a good few cen-

turies of this liberation, the world is to-day farther than it has ever been from being conquered by Christ. There is in this no cause for regret, for the less religion conquers, the more opportunity there is for rational and scientific thinking to conquer the world. And that is the only Salvation the world is in need of.

A pious journal reports a reverend doctor as giving the answer to “the destructive critics that abound to-day”—“I believe in the Holy Ghost,”—the fact that God is working. Now that is a very effective way of disposing of destructive criticism. The reverend gent affirms that he believes in a ghost!

There was shown at the British Industries Fair, as a product of British industry, steel spurs for cock-fighting, made for export to France and America. This is only one small item out of a very large number of things which are produced for the entertainment of the pre-civilized people among the alleged civilized white races. The widespread patronage of brutal sports and crude amusements, and the widely diffused belief in mascots, charms, spirits, and gods, etc.—these must be responsible for a vast expenditure of money and human energy and labour on things which have no connexion with true civilization. It serves to remind one that the boasted civilization of the white races is merely a thin veneer, and that the genuinely civilized portion of these races is remarkably small.

Stoke Newington has been the scene of battle between a Baptist Church and a Cinema. The Cinema (the Apollo—good luck to it!) which is next door to the Church has been applying for a licence to give entertainments on Sunday. The Church opposed this on the ostensible grounds that no other cinema is near a place of worship and that the Church was built first. We wonder whether any cinema would object to a church holding services on a weekday on the same grounds. It is, of course, obvious to anyone but a hard-boiled Christian that the *real* grounds for objection are that the entertainment given by the cinema is bound to prove a successful rival to that given by the church, and that the collections obtained by the latter (though voluntary) will suffer as a result of the payments made to the former (though compulsory). But what minister or parson will ever admit the true reasons for his objections to Sunday cinemas?

The following is from the *Evening News* of March 8:—

A headline reads “Wireless Without a Receiving Set.” The B.B.C. programmes for Sunday morning come through just as well without one. To which we might add that the Sunday afternoon and evening programmes come through better without one.

What should we do without religion? Tenants of the Fleetwood Council houses have to agree not to do washing on Sundays. They are lucky. In earlier generations very pious Christians would have frowned on their washing on any day. Fleetwood actually has an official who is appointed to see that the washing is not done on Sunday—and so the poor man is paid by the Council to stay away from Church. How some of the Christians there must envy him! At Westgate, Durham, it is found impossible to find land on which to build a village hall or a reception ground for children, although the village is surrounded by fields. Most of the land is owned by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Three of the Deacons of Barnstaple Baptist Chapel have been summoned by Richard Barrow, a former Deacon. He said that as he was taking his seat in Church he was seized and pulled out of the Church with such force that his nose bled. The summons was dismissed but the assaulted Deacon asked for police protection. The Superintendent promised to have police at all the services to see that no assault was committed. So wags the (religious) world!

Mr. Isaac Foot, M.P., told a pious gathering of Methodists that “I think of those who wrote our Hymn-book; and I shudder to think what it would be like if we lost them all and had to prepare one for ourselves. I fear

we would not have the lyricism that enabled our fathers to sing their way about the world, because they had something to sing about. Those hymns were full of hope." We presume that the difficulty in preparing a fresh lot of hymns to-day would lie in the fact that the modern believer is not prepared to get lyrical about the "Blood" in which their fathers delighted to bathe their morbid souls, *ad nauseum*. And they are not quite so wildly full of "hope," since the fear of Hell has become unfashionable, and they are rather uncertain about exactly what they have been "saved" from.

Another speaker at the same pious gathering said that "I stake my all on Jesus, he is everything to me. I am a miserable sort of chap, you know. I am tempted to be a pessimist." For our part, we find difficulty in understanding or appreciating the snivelling type of human animal, the kind so lacking in pluck that he can only muster up a little courage by imagining he has a God helping him. We daresay it would surprise him to know that there are many thousands of Atheists in the world who, without relying on any God or gods for aid, are not miserable, despondent, or pessimistic, and who live happy and useful lives.

Our pious contemporary, the *Christian Herald*, has noted that there are signs of a spiritual awakening. It brightly remarks that, "It is perhaps a gracious coincidence that as Spring approaches, with nature springing into renewed life, there are many signs in various parts of the country of a renewed interest in the Gospel. Evangelists tell us that there is a more ready response to their appeals . . ." Quite so! There are as many signs as there are religious liars. The truly remarkable thing about evangelists' reports is that they invariably record "great advances." Yet the churches seem in no danger from being overcrowded. And when one thinks of all the millions of people alleged to have been "saved" during the past ten or fifteen years, the wonder is that there should be any necessity for the "soul snatching" work that is now going on.

"Continental Protestantism," says a writer (Dr. Keller) in the *Contemporary* is "a desperately struggling army," and some parts of it "are near bankruptcy and ruin." The economic depression is, it seems, "catastrophic for some of these churches." Times are hard, and the Lord will not provide. He is oblivious of the inflation and depreciation of currencies, and although many of these churches "lost all their capital during and after the world war," He is as indifferent to their fate as He was to that bloody carnival of fighting Christians. What is to be done? Dr. Keller calls for "new financial methods." He says "the Roman Catholic Church has not been afraid to start a tremendous programme by loans to the amount of four million pounds"; Protestants should try to "borrow at reasonable rates of interest." What are we to say to this concern about filthy lucre from a writer who declares a few lines later that "modern Paganism, Communism, Materialism and Atheism" which are "our most cruel and irconcilable enemies," cannot be fought "with money and capital investments," but only with "the spirit" of Christ? What an odd thing it is that a "spirit" that can vanquish the poor churches' enemies cannot sustain them without the gross assistance of "up-to-date financial methods."

Canon Raven, of Liverpool, has been advising some Congregationalists to "strengthen the will for peace" by "thought and prayer." The Congregationalists may as well take the advice, since it will do no harm and it will keep them amused. On the other hand, we are sceptical about "thought and prayer" doing the cause of peace any good. Before the last war began there was never any lack of thought and prayer in connexion with Peace on Earth. Nevertheless, the main reason why Christians are to-day busy with thought and prayer as regards peace is that they are sorry for themselves—there was nothing gained by the war, but a tremendous lot lost. If the result had been otherwise, there would be none of this fuss and concern in the British churches about the cause of peace. The pious

patriots would still be congratulating God on his infinite wisdom in giving them a glorious victory.

A parson says that "our great country is Christian at heart, but is cursed by two great diseases, selfishness and fear." He might well have argued that the "two great diseases" prove that this country is Christian at heart. For the people have, for generations, been taught to be mighty concerned about their (alleged) personal welfare in a hereafter, and to dread a supernatural bogey in the sky. And if that doesn't induce the two great diseases of selfishness and fear, we should like to know what will. Furthermore, a nation cannot be Christian at heart unless that kind of selfishness and fear does beset it.

"Nothing is more vital," declares a missionary society, "to the welfare of humanity than the spread of the spirit of Christ through all the earth; such is the work of your missionaries overseas." When the missionaries tell the heathen that, we hope some intelligent heathen will not ask too many awkward questions about the state of Europe during the time that the "spirit of Christ" has been known among the nations. A truthful missionary would feel compelled to mention the Spanish Inquisition, the butchery of the Huguenots, the hunting of the Covenanters, and other inspiring items connected with Christian history.

"No Salvation without the Church?" is a theme which a reverend gentleman juggles with, to the extent of two columns, in a methodist weekly, apparently for the benefit of luke-warm adherents. The inevitable conclusion is, of course, that seekers after Salvation cannot do without the parson. The reverend gentleman is too modest and self-sacrificing to say so. But that is really all his wordy discussion amounts to. May we suggest that he could make out a much more convincing case if he argued the affirmative proposition, "That the parson cannot live without the people"?

### Fifty Years Ago.

INQUISITION, a faint and miniature picture of the future judgment, wherein the Catholics vainly strove to imitate Jesus and his Father. A branch of this tribunal has recently been established in the House of Commons by Messrs. Churchill, Northcote, Wolff and Co., for the more effectual dealing with one Charles Bradlaugh, an avowed Atheist, who is so far lost to all sense of decency as to go and get elected three times over by the people of Northampton, and who, so far, is too hardened to repent. The above company are the most godly and devout members of the House, who never pray without fasting, and are zealous even unto slaying for the Lord of Hosts. Some say they would light a fire in Palace Yard and burn Mr. Bradlaugh, only they fear the people out of doors. I have heard that when they have disposed of this gentleman they intend to publish a catechism for the Members of Parliament, as thus:—

1. Do you believe in a God?
2. Which of them?
3. Do you believe in the Trinity in unity?
4. Do you believe in the Jewish God or in the Christian, or in both? Which of them do you prefer?
5. Do you fast on Fridays?
6. Do you eat meat in Lent?
7. Do you believe that Jesus descended to hell? How long did it take him to go down and come up again? What did he do when there? Did the devil kick him out for blasphemy, or did he refuse to take the oath of allegiance, and so get his seat declared vacant? Was he ever re-elected?
8. Do you believe that Lord Random Church-chapel is the incarnation of the Holy Ghost?
9. Do you believe in the Devil?
10. Which do you believe to be the most eminent for piety and most like Jesus—Stafford Northcote, Drummond Wolff, Mr. Newdegate, or Randolph Churchill? Which smell most strongly of the Holy Ghost?

The "Freethinker," March 19, 1882.



## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

R. A. KERR.—Letter held over till next week.

A. MOSS.—Glad you have found *War, Civilization and the Churches* so useful. Of course, the *Express* symposium on youth and religion is "bunkum." But what does one expect from the yellow press? Letter held over till next week.

A. PARKER.—Pleased you were so "impressed" with Mr. Cohen's lectures at Birkenhead. We do intend showing the pinchbeck Joves, who hurl their thunder from the licensing bench, what it means to try to suppress Free-thought. Such men should restrict their energies to carrying round the plate at a Methodist meeting.

T. W. HAUGHTON.—Thanks for cutting. We quite agree with what is said, although a very great deal depends upon the meanings one gives the words used. Similar sentiments expressed during the war would have prevented a great deal of the evil that has happened since. You will see we have dealt with the other matter.

F. T. GREENALL.—The report will prove very useful. May deal with the topic when occasion offers.

*The "Freethinker" is supplied to the trade on sale or return. Any difficulty in securing copies should be at once reported to this office.*

*The Secular Society, Limited Office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.*

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*When the services of the National Secular Society in connexion with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, R. H. Rosetti, giving as long notice as possible.*

*Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.*

*The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—*

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*Lecture notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, by the first post on Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.*

*The National Secular Society's Office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.*

## Sugar Plums.

To-day (March 20) Mr. Cohen will lecture twice in the Chorlton Town Hall, Stretford Road, Manchester. At 3.0 his subject will be "The Manufacture of Mass Opinion," and in the evening, at 6.30, on "The Benefits of Unbelief." There will, no doubt, be the usual good meetings, but we should like to see as many Christians there as possible. They are never likely to hear of the benefits of unbelief from their religious teachers.

There was some trouble at Birkenhead on Sunday in connexion with Mr. Cohen's visit. The large hall of the Beechcroft Settlement had been booked, at the last moment the Secretary refused to allow the hall to be opened in consequence of a letter received from the Clerk to the Licensing Justices. Some little time back application was made to the proprietors of a Cinema for the use of their building for the meeting. Cinema proprietors are, apparently so ignorant of their legal rights that they applied to the Justices for permission to open the hall. And the Justices are also so ignorant of the law as to take upon themselves the right to say yea or nay to such an application. The plain fact is that anyone has a perfect right to open their doors on Sunday, whatever may be the

licence under which they operate during the rest of the week provided there is no charge for admission. The law on the subject is that no power in England can forbid the holding of a public meeting, where there is no charge for admission.

Following the refusal, however, the Branch applied for and was granted the use of the Beechcroft Hall, but two or three days before the date of the meeting the Secretary of Beechcroft received a letter from the Clerk to the Justices of a most surprising nature with regard to a renewal of the music licence to the Beechcroft Hall. The contents of that letter were of such a character that it is likely to be made the subject of proceedings later. It is a surprising thing if the freedom of public meeting can be at the mercy of a number of licensing magistrates.

Now the refusal to open the doors of the Beechcroft Hall involves a clear breach of contract, and steps will be taken to recover on that issue. How far the Clerk to the Justices can be brought to book, we are not at the moment of writing, quite sure, but whatever can be done will be done to prevent men of that stamp using their position to act as they have done in this case. On that point we do not wish to say more at the moment.

In the circumstances another meeting-place was hurriedly obtained, which was, however, quite inadequate to accommodate those who wished to be present. Numbers were unable to get in, even after the hall was crammed to suffocation. But the lectures were given, and to judge from the reception given them, to the delight of everyone present. There were many visitors from Liverpool, Port Sunlight, and other places in the neighbourhood. Mr. Standfast, the President of the Branch admirably filled the chair on both occasions, and it looks as though the enthusiasm aroused the Branch—quite a young one—will continue its work with increased enthusiasm. And we are taking steps to flood Birkenhead with Freethinking literature to as great an extent as we can manage. The N.S.S. is not a Society that is in the habit of sitting down quietly in such circumstances. We shall be pleased to hear from Birkenhead friends who are willing to help in any way whatever.

Mr. R. H. Rosetti will speak in the Co-operative Hall, Green Street, Sunderland, to-day (March 20) at 2.30, on "Spiritualism v. Common Sense," and at 7.30, on "The Good Men of Science Believe in." We hope the hall will be crowded on both occasions, and trust that the local saints will see that it is.

The Newcastle Branch N.S.S. has arranged for Mr. R. H. Rosetti to go over from Sunderland and lecture in the Socialist Hall, Arcade, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle, on Monday evening, March 21, the subject will be "Nature, Man, and God."

Birmingham Freethinkers are reminded that Mr. G. Whitehead will lecture in the Bristol Street Council Schools at 7.0 p.m. to-day (Sunday) on "The Evolution of Life from Microbe to Man." Those Christians who may attend will for once hear the subject dealt with free of all theological implications.

Birkenhead (Wirral) Branch N.S.S. announce a lady speaker to-day (Sunday) in Mrs E. Venton, who makes her first visit. The subject is "A Woman's Thoughts on Christianity." There is no sex barrier in the Free-thought movement, and there is plenty of room and work for lady speakers. We know the local saints will give Mrs. Venton a warm welcome, and we hope to hear of a very successful meeting.

We are asked to announce that on Monday, March 21, Dr. J. Danford Taylor (Mass., U.S.A.) will speak in the

Central Hall, Bath Street, Glasgow, on "Why I am an Atheist." The chair will be taken at 8 o'clock, and admission is 6d. and 1s. The meeting is held under the joint auspices of the local R.P.A. and the Glasgow Branch of the N.S.S.

A specimen of the West African nocturnal lemur, called the Potto, has arrived at the Zoo. The weird and unearthly cries which it emits at night are said by the natives to be due to the evil spirit. They also believe that the animal is so powerfully tenacious that should it, by some mischance, get hold of a human being, the latter is compelled to bear his unwanted burden for the rest of his life. From this description there seems to be a remarkable resemblance between this "spirit" of the West African forests and that more familiar "spirit of religion" which roams the mental forests of Christendom. With regard to the former, there is no known instance of a negro having actually carried one of these animals about with him all his life, so we may safely assume that its tenacity is not so great as reputed. With regard to the latter, being less material than the Potto, many persons have found it considerably more difficult to shake off. Perhaps this accounts for the expression, "You must be Potty!"

Dr. Paul Louis Couchod, the author of that remarkable little work *The Enigma of Jesus*, has now published through Messrs. Watts & Co. (4s. 6d. net) an exceedingly interesting criticism and a new translation of *The Book of Revelation*. He claims it to be a key to Christian origins, the earliest Christian book, and its author the first to express Christianity. *Revelation* is one of the numerous Apocalypses written by Jews or Jewish Christians, and no book of the Bible has excited more curiosity or criticism.

To the modern Freethought reader, most of *Revelation* reads like religious balderdash, but Dr. Couchod gives us an interpretation of its main ideas, which may show there is far more behind it than at first glance appears. His work is worth reading not only for its many suggestions as to the purpose of *Revelation*, but also for the information he gives of its author and the times in which he wrote—information gleaned from an intensive study of the work and many of its commentators. The translation should be compared with the Authorized Version. There are many learned notes which certainly elucidate the very difficult text. Mr. C. B. Bonner, M.A., is to be congratulated on his fine translation of the whole work from the French.

*The Story of the Devil*, by Arturo Graf, translated by E. N. Stone (Macmillan, 15s.), is a book which all good Christians should read. One quotation will suffice here. Referring to the glorious and Christian Middle Ages the author writes: "In Lindheim, a village in Hesse, four or five women were accused of having dug up the body of an infant and having employed it in the concoction of the usual witches' brew. Being tortured in the prescribed manner, they confessed the crime. Then the husband of one of them succeeded in having the graveyard visited, the better to arrive at the facts of the case. When the grave was opened the little body was seen, intact, lying in its coffin: but the inquisitor, not in the least disconcerted, declared that this must be an illusion of the accursed Devil; and since he already had the confessions of the guilty women, no further investigation should be made, but justice should be allowed to take its course to the honour and glory of the Most Holy Trinity; and so the women were burned alive." Luckily for all of us, Christians included, the Devil is now practically defunct. His blood-lust, however, has never been anything to compare with that of "the Most Holy Trinity," who is at the present time, alas, merely somnolent. What a merciful release it would be for humanity if some heavenly Jacl were to repeat her famous act of "hitting the nail on the head."

## Masterpieces of Freethought.

### XII.

#### ANACALYPSIS.

By GODFREY HIGGINS.

#### I.

It is surprising how little of the past masterpieces of Freethought is generally known, except to those curious few for whom the byeways of literature are a perpetual delight. Quite a number of the books I have dealt with in these columns are almost forgotten and yet they have helped our cause to a degree that would astonish us if only it were possible to measure their influence. It is true most are difficult to get. They are out of print, and it would be worth nobody's while to reprint them. The methods of the approach to religion as a sociological, historical and psychological question, are now quite different from those employed by the sturdy old Freethinkers who were (though perhaps they did not know it) hampered by wrong ideas and conclusions forced on them by their environment and culture. It is a difficult matter to escape from surrounding influences and the habits and thoughts and prejudices imbibed in our childhood have a way of sticking to us all our lives. Thus a book might appear to us absolutely iconoclastic on the question of religion, and yet its author insists upon calling himself a Christian or at least a Theist.

I expect fewer readers of this notice have read *Anacalypsis* than Dupuis' *Origin of all Worships* in spite of the fact that the former is an English book. The reason is a very simple one. It is most difficult to obtain. The copies of the original edition which have recently appeared in book sales rooms, fetched anything between £20 to £40 for the two volumes. Until 1927 it was never (I think) reprinted in its entirety. The well known spiritualist publisher, J. Burns, whose shop, forty or fifty years ago, was the resort of many freethinking and liberal-minded people, published the first of a four-volume reprint in 1878. It was really unfortunate that he was unable to publish the complete work. However, a verbatim reprint in two volumes came out in 1927 in America, and a few copies can be had in this country for £9 9s. the two volumes. I mention these small bibliographical facts to show how every excuse can be put forward as to the reason why so few people have read *Anacalypsis*. And there are other reasons, of course, as I shall show in the course of these articles.

Godfrey Higgins himself was, like Anthony Collins and very few Freethinkers, a well-to-do man, and he was not hindered through poverty from pursuing his studies on religion. He was wealthy enough to publish his own books and as he was a fine scholar (though without actual academic distinctions—if they are worth anything in these matters), his books can be studied on their merits. A few words on his comparatively uneventful life may be necessary here. He was born in 1773 and died in 1833. His father was a well known and wealthy squire, living near Doncaster, and Godfrey received a good education, finishing up in Cambridge, though he took no degree. He married in 1800, and on the death of his father, settled on the estate, Skellow Grange, and devoted the rest of his life to an "unbiased investigation into the history of religious beliefs." In addition, he acted as a very fine and humane Justice of Peace for his district, helped in many social reforms, and was repeatedly invited to stand for Parliament, but

declined. He wrote many pamphlets on political and social questions, and published in 1826, *Horæ Sabbaticæ* a vigorous and splendidly documented (in the second edition) plea for the secularization of Sunday on the ground that it was *not* the Sabbath day. His contention was that if the Gospels were true, Jesus and the apostles were out to abolish the Jewish Sabbath as far as they were concerned. It was a holy day merely for the Jews, and should have been abolished with the other Jewish rites and ceremonies under the second dispensation. Higgins hated the gloomy and horrible Christian Sunday of his time and wanted to make it a day of pleasure and happiness. Needless to say he was bitterly opposed by his brother Christians, and the fact that for nearly 100 years after his book was written the Christian Sunday in England was synonymous with everything that was unlovely, doleful, melancholy, solemn, and depressing is proof enough of the tremendous influence of those Godlike puritans who imposed their sickening creed on the will of democratic England. Even now, it is almost impossible to find any change in the Christian Sunday in many parts of Great Britain, and any attempt to brighten up the day is, as is well known, strongly attacked by almost all our magistrates or those in charge of the "morals" of the people. But it is good to put on record Higgins' valiant attempt, for which, of course, he will never get the credit when finally the Christian Sunday, as such, is abolished.

Higgins' next books were the *Celtic Druids* and *Life of Mohammed*. I have read neither, but they are, according to the notices I have seen regarding them, full of learning, and packed with all sorts of suggestions and speculations. This applies particularly to the *Celtic Druids*, an extremely scarce work, hardly ever priced in booksellers' catalogues under £5.

For over twenty years, however, Higgins had been at work on the *Anacalypsis*, the sub-title of which was "An attempt to draw aside the Veil of the Saitic Isis, or an Inquiry into the origin of Languages, Nations, and Religions." It could hardly be more comprehensive. Though—according to the notice in the *Dictionary of National Biography*—Higgins called himself a Christian, it was very certainly obvious to his contemporaries that he was very far from being orthodox. It was difficult for an uncultured working man, in his day, to disassociate himself from the narrow and crude evangelism surrounding him. It must have been far more difficult for the cultured and wealthy country squire to openly avow heterodoxy. The *Anacalypsis* did more than this, however. It definitely dealt with phallic worship, the side of ancient religion which was far too "shocking" to be even hinted at. "Sex," except in the sense of legal marriage was simply "debauchery," or the worst kind of depravity. I read somewhere once that Richard Payne Knight was ostracized from "decent" society for writing *The Worship of Priapus*, and the *Anacalypsis* was only a little "better." It did not bluntly call a spade a spade, but hinted that there were such things in ancient religion as the Linga and the Yoni. It is but just to say, however, that Higgins in developing his thesis, became almost as outspoken as Payne Knight.

Mr. John M. Robertson devotes two pages of his *History of Freethought in the Nineteenth Century* to Godfrey Higgins, and his criticisms are, as one would expect, keen and penetrating. He says:—

The general theory of Higgins . . . has long passed out of discussion, as being prematurely built on a mass of prescientific learning, collated in times of speculative history. He is deep in Hyde, Kir-

cher, Gale, Cudworth, Beausobre, Fabre, Bryant, Montfaucon, Vossius, Jablouski, Sir William Jones, Creuzer, Dupuis and a dozen other orientalist and all bring grist to his mill . . . He throws out indeed many valid theories and suggestions . . . Dying in 1833, when only his first volume had been printed off, he was balked of the response of the priests to his greetings; and the cost of his large quartos, with their numerous and interesting prints, prevented any wide circulation of the book. But it served as a mine of suggestion for Freethinkers for half a century.

The fact that Higgins had read and studied the authors cited by Mr. Robertson is sufficient to show how deeply the whole question of the origin of religion had moved him. These writers were often working in the dark, and scholarly as they were, had to depend sometimes on second-hand learning. There were few means of verifying the facts and the speculations in their works. Higgins himself journeyed a great deal abroad to verify his own conclusions. All the same it must be noted that the mass of historical and classical data with which these books abounded were based on genuine authorities. Gibbon, for instance, made very few mistakes in his huge work, as Professor Bury has pointed out, and the men on whose researches Higgins often rested his case were very able scholars.

Men like Peter Bayle brought together in their works enormous hidden or out-of-the-way material of tremendous importance to students, and Higgins made every use of this kind of material. It is necessary to insist upon these things because modern research has, of course, brought to light many things unknown and unthought of by the older Freethinkers. We have passed them, under the light of science, and can explain obscure points in religious history because of our better knowledge far more justly than they ever dreamed possible. But the broadness of their views, and the courage of their speculations, and often the correctness of their inferences are of the utmost importance to those of us who are still groping in the dark, and who do not agree that all contemporary investigation has been of help. That is why *Anacalypsis* must profoundly interest any reader desirous of studying the questions Higgins deals with, and it does not matter, at first, whether he is always right.

Robert Taylor in the *Devil's Pulpit* had two lectures on the myth of Mary, in which he tried to show how intimately the mother-goddess idea of the East was bound up with the Gospel story. Higgins also has two long chapters on the subject, very interesting to read in this connexion. His method of approach was a different one. He noted that both in ancient and modern times "the worship of a female, supposed to be a virgin with an infant in her arms has prevailed." He then set out to find out who Mary, the mother of Jesus was, and quotes some interesting passages from the orthodox Dr. Stukely, such as "Adonis is the Hebrew Adonai, which the heathens learned from the Arabians—one of the sacred names of the Deity. Mary or Miriam, St. Jerome interprets *Myrrha Maris*: Mariame is the same appellation of which Ariadne seems a corruption. Orpheus calls the mother of Bacchus, *Leucothea, A Sea Goddess*. Nonnus in *Dyonys*, calls Sirius star, *Mæria*, in Greek *Maires*. Our Sanford hence infers this star to mean Miriam, Moses' sister. Vossius approves of it. The Greek *Maira* by metathesis is the Greek *Maria*."

The reader should compare this passage with Taylor's two lectures.

H. CUTNER.

(To be concluded.)

## Pity the Poor Parson!!

HE is having a very bad time just now. His congregation is dwindling to almost vanishing point. In some churches and some chapels too, he has to deplore every Sunday morning a beggarly array of empty pews and benches. I met an old friend of mine a short time ago who sings in the choir at a large church in Camberwell, and he told me, with tears in his eyes, that apart from the members of the choir and a pew-opener or two, there were only five persons to listen to the sermon. Well, the clergy and the Nonconformist parsons have brought it upon themselves. They have repeated the old, old story so often that their parishioners have got tired of it—and worse still for the parsons, many of their hearers have found out that the old story is not true, and as a consequence have left the Church for ever. Besides some of the clergy are so manifestly insincere that persons who still call themselves Christians look down upon them with undisguised contempt. As for Freethinkers, as a rule, they regard the clergy as fit subjects for their sport and derision.

When I was a member of the Camberwell Borough Council I took delight in making fun of the clerical members of that body because they were so unbusinesslike and stupid, and when one of them proposed to open the meeting of the Council with prayer to show that we were really living in a Christian country—I moved an amendment and endeavoured to demonstrate that there was no efficacy in prayer, and so far convinced the other members, that they rejected the motion by a very large majority, though most of them would have been offended if anybody had said that they were not Christians. Everybody knows that Christians have always thought it quite fair to libel Freethinkers. They have lied about them with absolute impunity. They have called them "Infidels," "blasphemers," and charged them with being guilty of almost all the crimes under the sun. And now we get our revenge by laughing at them, by using them for our fun and sport. At Christmas time I purchased a packet of Christmas cards issued by the National Secular Society, and I sent them round to various priests and parsons and other professing Christians just in the way of fun. The card contained the lines by the late Thomas Hardy, novelist and poet, and ran as follows:—

"Peace upon earth was said, we sing it,  
And pay a million priests to bring it,  
After two thousand years of mass,  
We've got as far as poison gas."

This card I sent to the vicar of the parish in which I live. This vicar knows me well, because I criticized some sermons he proposed to deliver some time ago in the *Freethinker*. I can imagine the shock he received when he read this card. The following day, when I was walking through a road near my house, I met him. He looked at me very sternly, as much as to say: "You're the rascal that sent me that card," but I gazed at him quite as sternly and we both parted with a smile on our faces. My next card I sent to the Baptist minister who officiates at a chapel a few streets from mine in Peckham. The third card I sent to a Swiss friend who lives at New Cross. He is a professed Roman Catholic, though he admires Freethinkers for the consistent way in which they rely upon reason as their sole guide in all concerns of life. This Swiss Catholic sent the card on to his parish priest, but though apparently his priest and the two parsons felt hurt at the lines of the poet—none of them ventured to mention the subject in the pulpit.

One of the cards I sent to my only living son—(my younger son I lost in the war) but this one, was not only seriously wounded, but gassed also, and has suffered severely as the result of it ever since—he thought that Freethinkers should send a card to every priest and parson they know, just to remind them that they had done nothing in their official capacity to bring "Peace upon earth." And so the cards went round. I sent one to a nephew of mine who was in the Air Force during the Great War, and he laughed consumedly over the lines. And so one after the other I got rid of all my packet. I wonder how many Freethinkers did likewise? I think there is nothing better for us to do now-a-days than badgering the parsons and demonstrating to them how inconsistent is their conduct with their preaching or with the alleged teachings of their Lord and Master—Jesus Christ. And yet although I take delight in ridiculing their pretensions and their teachings, I often pity them for the unfortunate position in which they sometimes find themselves. Suppose they find out by study that Christianity is nothing but an old and effete superstition, what chance have they under present economic condition of getting other employment? Although they have had University training they would find it hard to get suitable employment for their particular attainments. All the professions are overcrowded. Lawyers, actors, authors, politicians—are all scrambling for a decent living—so what chance the dear vicar, or the poor curate? Not much. So after we have had our laugh—there comes the other side of the question, and that's why we are sometimes constrained to say, "Pity the poor Parsons!" They have had the misfortune to get into what the Bishop of London called: "A Rotten Profession," and they can't get out of it—poor devils!

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

## Dr. Johnson and Futurity.

IF ever there was a Christian man that man was Dr. Johnson. He has been dead nearly one hundred and fifty years, but he lives, not only in the pages of Boswell, but in his own inimitable, if somewhat irascible personality. There is an Epitaph upon him which reads as follows:—

"Here lies poor Johnson, reader have a care,  
Tread lightly lest you rouse a sleeping bear;  
Religious, moral, generous and humane  
He was—but self-sufficient, rude and vain:  
Ill bred, and overbearing in dispute  
A scholar and a Christian—yet a brute.  
Would you know all his wisdom and his folly,  
His actions, sayings, mirth and melancholy?  
Boswell and Thrale, retailers of his wit  
Will tell you how he wrote, and talk'd and cough'd and spit."

Mr. Augustine Birrell, a lover of his, admits a good deal of the least pleasant part of this obituary, but maintains that the Doctor prevailed over his poverty and melancholy and distemper and "over even the fear of death." It is perhaps presumptuous to question a judgment of this authority. It is, however, unquestionable that there is some evidence to the contrary so far as the fear of death is concerned.

If Johnson wrote of "Death, kind nature's signal of retreat," he also, when asked by Boswell "is not the fear of death natural to man?" replied "So much so, Sir, that the whole of life is but keeping away the thoughts of it." Again, to quote the *Life*, "When we were alone I introduced the subject of death, and endeavoured to maintain that the fear of it might be got over. I told him that David Hume said to me, he was no more uneasy to think he should *not be* after his life, than that he *had not been* before he began to exist." Johnson: "Sir, if he really thinks so, his perceptions are disturbed;

he is mad. If he does not think so, he lies. He may tell you he holds his finger in the flame of a candle, without feeling pain; would you believe him? When he dies, he at least gives up all he has." Boswell: "Foote, Sir, told me, that when he was very ill he was not afraid to die." Johnson: "It is not true Sir." Boswell further asked whether "we might fortify our minds for the approach of death," and Johnson answered in a passion, "No, Sir, let it alone. It matters not how a man dies, but how he lives. The act of dying is not of importance it lasts so short a time. A man knows it must be so, and submits. It will do him no good to whine." Before anyone attaches a stoical significance to this dictum let him consider these others. "No wise man will be contented to die if he thinks he is to go into a state of punishment. Nay, no wise man will be contented to die, if he thinks he is to fall into annihilation . . . No, there is no rational principle by which a man can die contented, but a trust in the mercy of God, through the merits of Jesus Christ." Boswell, whose authority good Mr. Birrell will not question, affirms that Johnson "had an awful dread of death, or rather, of something after death"; and asks, "what rational man, who seriously thinks of quitting all that he has ever known, and going into a new and unknown state of being, can be without that dread? But his fear was from reflection; his natural courage. This fear, in that one instance was the result of philosophical and religious consideration. He feared death, but he feared nothing else, not even what might occasion death." If we omit from the last sentence the "philosophical" consideration—for philosophical consideration alone does not produce this dread or fear—it is apparent that, notwithstanding that Johnson was a courageous man, who stood up to the hard knocks of circumstance in this life, it was "religious consideration," the fear of that "something after death,"—which fear has no existence apart from religion and the belief in a world to come—that made it possible for Johnson to say that "he never had a moment in which death was not terrible to him."

There was, perhaps a little of the sceptic even in the doctor. Take this conversation, for example. Eeward: "I wonder that there should be people without religion." Johnson, Sir: "You need not wonder at this when you consider how large a proportion of almost every man's life is passed without thinking of it. I myself was for some years totally regardless of religion, it had dropped out of my mind. It was at an early part of my life. Sickness brought it back, and I hope I have never lost it since." Boswell: "My dear Sir, what a man must you have been without religion! Why you must have gone on drinking and swearing and"—Johnson: "I drank enough and swore enough to be sure": Seward, "One should think that sickness and the view of death would make more men religious." Johnson, "Sir, they do not know how to go about it. They have not the first notion. *A man who has never had religion before no more goes religious when he is sick than a man who has never learned figures can count when he has need of calculation.*"

Near the end of his life, in 1784—Boswell tells us "at any time when he was ill, he was very pleased to be told that he looked better," and quotes him as saying, "I never thought confidence with respect to futurity any part of the character of a brave, a wise, or a good man. Bravery has no place where it can avail nothing: wisdom impresses strongly the consciousness of those faults of which it is, perhaps, itself an aggravation; and goodness always wishing to be better and imputing every deficiency to criminal negligence, and every fault to voluntary corruption never dares to suppose the condition of forgiveness fulfilled nor what is wanting in the crime supplied by penitence. *This is the state of the best, but what must be the condition of him whose heart will not suffer him to rank himself among the best, or among the good? Such must be his dread of the approaching trial as will leave him little attention to the opinion of those whom he is leaving for ever; and the serenity that is not felt it can be no virtue to feign.*"

A few months after—on December 13. Dr. Johnson died. Mr. Birrell says, "he met his end as a brave man should," but, so at least it would seem, he would have

met it with more confidence but for the fear that religion inspired in him. And so—if we may quote Mr. Birrell again, and this time without question—"We here part company with Johnson, bidding him a most affectionate farewell, and leaving him in undisturbed possession both of place and power. His character will bear investigation, and some of his books perusal. The latter, indeed, may be submitted to his own test, and there is no truer one. A book, he wrote, should help us either to enjoy life or to endure it. His frequently do both."

ALAN HANDSACRE.

## Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

### THE ETHICS OF SUICIDE.

SIR,—Under the title, "A Pseudo Priestess Speaks," in an otherwise excellent article, I note some remarks on suicide, which I regard as untrue, unreasonable, discourteous, and offensive. I beg permission to comment on them.

(1) To "most of us, a vast majority of suicides are mentally deranged. If they are not and have any friends or relatives, they are committing [sic] an act, if not of cowardice, of cruelty, towards such friends or relatives."

It is a curious thing that few men can discuss suicide without going crazy! My quotation seems to suggest this.

I criticize the disposition of men to talk and act as if they understood the private affairs of others, and, especially the wisdom of others, in the regulation of their own lives, as well as do those directly concerned. The charge of either "cowardice" or "cruelty" here is insulting, illogical and ignorant.

Postulate a man suffering intensely from cancer, say, with perhaps a year to live. Because he has "friends or relations"—who, presumably, demand that he continue to live: infinitely selfish and heartless, they must be—is he "committing" cowardice or cruelty to them by suicide? What right have they to demand that he live a year of agony? Would it add to the happiness of his "friends" to have him suffer, day after day, and month after month, and to know that he was enduring all this, because of them?

(2) As the suicide seeks precisely what the coward fears and avoids, how can he be called cowardly? He cannot.

(3) The humane sentiment of to-day considers that suicide should be aided, not thwarted. Millions of people are alive now who might far better be dead.

PHILIP G. PEABODY.

### OUR FREEDOM.

SIR,—I was much interested to read Mr. Geo. F. Green's letter in your issue of March 13. Having heard Mr. Kumbleben lecture in Newcastle-on-Tyne some two and a half years ago, and having also read several of his articles in a magazine to which he writes, I have not heard or seen anything of a wild or dangerous statement that should be likely to cause anyone to look upon him as a dangerous person, and am at a loss to know why he should be refused admission to England. May I suggest a few readers of the *Freethinker* write to their various Members of Parliament asking them to raise the question in the House of Commons. That might bring some interesting information to light

J. G. BARTRAM.

### ROBERT TAYLOR AND HIS CRITICS.

SIR,—The constitutional inability of Mr. Howell Smith to understand Taylor's point with regard to the myth of Mary and his similar inability to understand my point with regard to the English of the Bible, make further discussion quite futile.

His last question is, however, delightfully disingenuous. It is for those who assert that Biblical Hebrew was a spoken language, to prove it. I should like, say, a dozen of the most eminent philologists in the world, to

give me, not their opinion, but the *evidence* (on which, of course, they all must agree) as to when and where Hebrew was spoken. I know of none, so far.

My primary object in writing was, however, to vindicate Robert Taylor from the ignorant belittlement of Christians and those Rationalists who never read him, and I am glad I had the opportunity of doing so.

H. CUTNER.

#### A CORRECTION.

SIR,—The reference in Julius Cæsar's (Shakespeare) in Mr. Palmer's article on "Ancient Rome," is an anachronism. One of the conspirators says "the clock hath stricken three." There were clocks in Julius Cæsar's time, but no striking clocks.

M.G.

#### Obituary.

##### JOHN WALTER PEACOCK.

It is my painful duty to record the death of John Walter Peacock, who died at his residence, Grosvenor Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, on March 10, aged seventy-two years. Deceased was the oldest member of the Newcastle Branch of the National Secular Society. His continuous membership making a record of fifty years, he will doubtless be remembered by many of the older readers of the *Freethinker*. Interment took place at Heaton Cemetery on March 14. Mr. J. C. Keast read a Secular address at the grave, to a large number of relatives and friends. Deceased is survived by two married daughters who will have the sympathy of all friends.

##### HENRY BROUGHAM DOUGHTY.

ON Tuesday, March 8, the remains of Henry Brougham Doughty were cremated at the Golders Green Crematorium. Death resulted from bronchitis after an illness of a few days. During a life of seventy-eight years much activity had been given to reform movements, such as Ireland, the Land, and Freethought. A great admirer of the late Charles Bradlaugh, he maintained his interest and support for Freethought to the end. His figure and voice were familiar features at the Regent's Park meetings of the North London Branch of the N.S.S. A Secular Service was read by Mr. R. H. Rosetti.

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## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

### LONDON.

#### OUTDOOR.

**FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S.** (corner of Shorrolde Road, North End Road): 7.30, Messrs. F. Day and C. Tuson.

**NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.**—A meeting will be held at White Stone Pond, Hampstead, near the Tube Station every Sunday morning at 11.30 a.m. Speaker to-day Mr. L. Ebury.

**WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.** (Hyde Park): 12.0, Mr. B. A. Le Maine; at 3.30 and 6.30, Messrs. Bryant, Hyatt, Tuson and Wood. Current *Freethinkers* can be obtained opposite the Park Gates, on the corner of Edgware Road, during and after the meetings.

#### INDOOR.

**HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE** (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8, near Marlborough Road Station): 11.15, Mr. J. Hutton Hynd—"Robert Burns: A Study in Human Nature."

**SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY** (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.0, Marjorie Gullan will conduct a Recital by the London Verse Speaking Choir.

**SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY** (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Pryus Hopkins, M.A., Ph. D.—"Religion and the Family."

**SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.** (New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W.4, Hall No. 5, near Clapham North Station, Underground): 7.30, Mr. E. G. Smith, Animal Defence and Anti-Vivisection Society—"Civilization and the Animals."

**STUDY CIRCLE** (N.S.S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): Monday, March 21, at 8.0, Mr. Millward will open a discussion on "Freethought and Social Reform."

**THE CONWAY DISCUSSION CIRCLE** (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): Tuesday, March 22, at 7.0, H. E. The Spanish Ambassador (Sr. Ramon Percy de Ayala)—"Religion in Spain."

**THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY** (City of London Hotel, 107 York Road, Camden Road, N.7, five minutes from the Brecknock): 7.20, Mrs. E. Grout—"The Social Value of Temperance."

**WEMBLEY AND DISTRICT BRANCH N.S.S.** (Zealley's Cafe, 100 High Road, Wembley): 7.30, Mr. G. F. Green—"Freethought and Politics."

### COUNTRY.

#### INDOOR.

**BIRKENHEAD** (Wirral) **BRANCH N.S.S.** (Boilermakers' Hall, Argyle Street, entrance Lorn Street): 7.0, Mrs. E. Venton (London)—"A Woman's Thoughts on Christianity."

**BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S.** (Bristol Street Council Schools): 7.0, Mr. G. Whitehead—"The Evolution of Life from Microbe to Man."

**EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION** (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. Jack Pickford—"Modern Miracles."

**GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY** (City Hall, Albion Street, No. 2 Room): 6.30, Mr. R. White—"Some Thoughts on Jesus." Questions and discussion. Silver collection.

**LIVERPOOL** (Merseyside) **BRANCH N.S.S.** (Transport Buildings, 41 Islington, Liverpool, entrance Christian Street): 7.0, S. Wollen (Liverpool)—"The Riddle of the Bumpy Tomb." Current *Freethinkers* and other literature on sale.

**LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY** (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. E. H. Hassell.—A Lecture.

**MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S.** (Chorlton Town Hall, Stretford Road, Manchester): Mr. Chapman Cohen (President of the N.S.S.) will lecture at 3.0, on "The Making of Mass Opinion," and at 6.30, on "The Benefits of Unbelief." Admission free.

**NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S.** (Socialist Hall, Arcade, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle): Monday, March 21, at 7.30 p.m., Mr. R. H. Rosetti—"Nature, Man, and God."

**NOTTINGHAM COSMOPOLITAN DEBATING SOCIETY** (Lecture Theatre, University College, Shakespeare Street): 2.30, Mr. E. C. Saphin—"The Sources and History of the Christian Cross."

**PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S.** (Plymouth Chambers, Drake Circus, Hall No. 5): 7.0, Councillor J. Farrell—"The Literature of Freethought."

**PAISLEY BRANCH N.S.S.** (Baker's Hall, c. Forbes Place): 7.30, Dr. Mrs. Marwick—"Birth Control."

**SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S.** (Co-operative Rooms, Green Street): 2.30, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—"Spiritualism v. Common Sense." At 7.30, "The God Men of Science Believe in."

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